

Unity Acres

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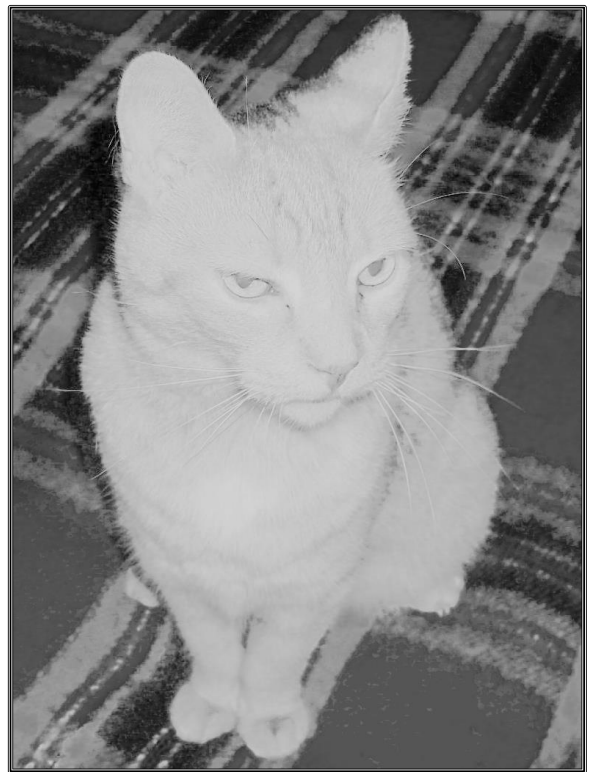
Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

We have gotten in the habit of marking the passage of time with certain important dates and anniversaries and holidays. Some of these are dates, like Christmas or New Years or Thanksgiving, that are marked on most people's calendars. Others are dates that have taken on particular significance for a given individual, or family or community.

In recent weeks we have observed several of these dates.

In March 27, a 'Cat Clinic' was organized by Loretta D and conducted by Dr. Alexis Stambaugh in the "Dispensary". There are 19 cats in 'residence' at the Acres. Most of these are pets of one or another of the men. On the morning of the clinic, the men with their cats gather in the mail room waiting area, which adjoins the Dispensary (also, Mark R and Cujo, the sole dog at the Acres who also receives his vaccinations during the Cat Clinic). After a short wait, each of the cats is seen in turn, receives his or her shots, then returns home.

We have been holding a clinic day for the cats for several years, as it became clear it would be far easier for us to have the vet to come to us once for the annual vaccinations than to transport 19 cats individually or in groups to the clinic in Pulaski. Therefore, once a year in the spring, a veterinarian from North Country Veterinary Services comes out to the Acres to give the necessary vaccinations. Those of the pet-owners who have a source of income contributed donations to help defray the expense of the clinic.



Tommie Voorhees

Thank-you, Dr. Stambaugh. And thank-you, cats and cat-owners for your full co-operation!

A fund-raiser dinner benefitting Unity Acres was organized for April 19th, at Pensabene's Casa Grande, on State Fair Blvd. This was to celebrate Unity Acres' 43rd Anniversary. Approximately 225 attended, including a delegation of staff, residents and other 'North Country folks' who traveled together in comfort in a big yellow school bus. (Thank-you, Sandy Creek School District!)



Mike D., Betty & Bob B.

This year's theme was 'the Mustard Seed' (*Matthew 13, 31-32*), our honorees were Bob & Betty Belge, Mark Capone and Mary Maples. Mike De Salvo, Jerry Berrigan and Pat Waelder were presenters for the honorees. Each of the honorees received a framed 'Sacred Heart award' which features the reproduction of a cross design that appears on the altar in our Sacred Heart Chapel. These awards were created by Rick Bowman.

Musical entertainment for the evening was provided by the McCarthy Family Singers – Jim, Deirdre, and Shane. Paul Wittjung and Sister Monica Nortz 'emcee'd' for the evening. Father Fred Daley was our key-note speaker.

Our thanks to all who spent many hours organizing this enjoyable evening, deciding the theme, the décor and the menu, producing the invitations, and addressing the many other details that inevitably arise. This was the 4th such dinner organized by our dedicated fund-raiser committee since the celebration of our 40th anniversary in 2009. Our thanks as well to the staff and management at Pensabene's for a delicious meal and excellent service, and finally, to all who attended or supported the event.

A few weeks after our evening at Pensabene's, a delegation of Unity Acres staff and residents again headed south to Syracuse on May 3rd, this time to attend the annual Dorothy Day Award dinner, held at St. Lucy's, and this year honoring St. Lucy's pastor, Father Jim Mathews. The Dorothy Day Awards were originally sponsored by parishioners of St. Andrew's parish (now closed) to benefit Dorothy Day House, an emergency shelter for women in Syracuse and to highlight and celebrate the influence of the Catholic Worker philosophy in the Syracuse community.

In mid-May, preparations for the vegetable garden begin each year. (May 15th is the memorial for Saint Isidore the Farmer.) For the second year, our neighbor Reuben brings a team of horses to the Acres, on a Saturday, to work the garden before

planting begins. Then Henry goes to Trust Nursery in Pulaski to purchase the tomato, pepper, cabbage and broccoli plants (and a few others) plus seeds for squash, beans, corn, radishes (and a few others). The plants have been in the ground, and are growing well.

In mid-spring we also plan for the burial of any of our men who have passed away during the prior winter months, and whose remains have been stored in the vault at the cemetery in Pulaski. This year there were two spring burials – Robert Garrison and Steve Powers. Steve’s brother and sister-in-law, Joe and Joan, travelled up from Yonkers to attend the interment of Steve’s ashes, and a family friend of Bob’s joined us from Waterloo for the interment of Bob’s remains.

In the interim, we received the news that JOHN D. CONWAY, died in Syracuse on April 19th, at the age of 74. John, better known to us as ‘Whitey’, had lived at the Acres for several years during the 1990s, helped in the kitchen and also did some ‘tailoring’ for the men and volunteers, but finally settled at the Toomey-Abbott apartments in Syracuse. Although Whitey had been away from the Acres for at least



The Saturday before Memorial Day

eight or ten years, he would contact us from time to time, to reiterate his wish to be buried at Unity Acres. John’s funeral was conducted at our Sacred Heart Chapel, with burial following immediately afterward at Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery, on April 26th. John’s sister Virginia and cousin Helen traveled from out-of-state to be in attendance for the services.

Also in connection with the cemetery, we have started a practice of placing flags at the each of the veteran’s grave. (This was at Marie Lambie’s suggestion a few years ago.) Loretta, Mark B, and a group of veterans organized the placing of the flags on the Saturday of

Memorial Day weekend. The flags will remain at the graves until November 11, Veterans Day. There are now over 70 verterans buried at Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery, out of a total of approximately 210 graves. In the days before hand, Don H and Mark B had spent many hours getting the cemetery ready. Bob K led the gathering in a brief prayer honoring the veterans, their services, and their lives.

Wishing everyone a very happy and safe summer.

Steve Dickhout

Prayer: Pentecost & Summer Come, Holy Spirit!

“Jesus told them another parable. ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like this: a man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field. It is the smallest of seeds, but it grows into the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches.’” *—Matthew 13: 31-32*

“... when he saw the large crowd, His heart was moved with pity for them, and He healed their sick. ... ‘All we have here are five loaves and two fish.’ ... ‘Bring them to me.’ He took the loaves and fishes, looked up to heaven and gave thanks to God. He gave them to the disciples and they gave them to the people. Everyone ate and had enough, and the disciples took up twelve baskets left over.” *—Matthew 14: 13-20*

Spirit of God, we thank You for the many miracles recorded in the Gospels. You have inspired the growth of our Unity Acres too in many miraculous ways. Like the mustard seed, it started very small, but You breathed on it, and made it grow. Even as the birds nested in the tree’s branches, so men have found in the Acres a home where peace and caring sustain them.

Spirit of God, You have inspired the growth of the Acres to be a place where miracles of ‘loaves and fishes’ continue, Jesus still sees the hungry crowd and has pity on them, and through the disciples, feeds them.

We pray that the Spirit continues to inspire the multitude. May we grow in all good things. May we grow in love. May Unity Acres ever be a home, where ‘Mind, Body and Spirit’ are renewed.

Amen.

Father Robert Jones